

CLAIMS

1. A water-dispersible cellulose,
the cellulose being derived from a plant cell wall, crystalline and fine fibrous, and comprising 30% by weight or more of a component stably suspensible in water and having a loss tangent of less than 1, when made into a 0.5% by weight aqueous dispersion.
2. The water-dispersible cellulose according to Claim 1, comprising 50% by weight or more of the component stably suspensible in water and having the loss tangent of less than 0.6, when made into a 0.5% by weight aqueous dispersion.
3. An aqueous suspension-form composition, comprising:
the water-dispersible cellulose according to Claim 1 or 2 in an amount of 0.0005-7% by weight and water.
4. A water-dispersible dry composition, comprising:
the water-dispersible cellulose according to Claim 1 or 2 in an amount of 50-95% by weight and a water-soluble polymer and/or a hydrophilic substance in an amount of 5-50% by weight.
5. The water-dispersible dry composition according to Claim 4, having a loss tangent of less than 1, when made into a 0.5% by weight aqueous dispersion.
6. The water-dispersible dry composition

according to Claim 4 or 5, wherein the water-soluble polymer is sodium carboxymethyl cellulose.

7. A gel-forming composition, comprising:

the water-dispersible dry composition according to Claim 6 and at least one polysaccharide selected from the group consisting of alginic acids, galactomannan and glucomannan.

8. A gel composition, comprising:

the water-dispersible cellulose according to Claim 1 or 2, the aqueous suspension-form composition according to Claim 3 or the water-dispersible dry composition according to any one of Claim 4 to Claim 6, and at least one polysaccharide selected from the group consisting of alginic acids, galactomannan and glucomannan.

9. A gel composition according to Claim 8, wherein the polysaccharide is glucomannan, and the composition having a sponge-like structure and being edible.

10. A process for producing the water-dispersible cellulose according to Claim 1 or 2 or the aqueous suspension-form composition according to Claim 3, comprising at least the following steps (1) to (3):

(1) preparing an aqueous dispersion of a cellulose fibrous particle having a length of 4 mm or less from a cellulosic substance derived from a plant cell wall which has an average degree of polymerization of 400 or higher and an α -cellulose content of 60-100%

by weight, provided that the cellulosic substance having an average degree of polymerization lower than 1,300 and an α -cellulose content of more than 90% by weight are excepted;

(2) fiber-shortening and micronizing of the cellulose fibrous particle in the aqueous dispersion of (1) so that a sedimentation volume thereof becomes 70 % by volume or more; and

(3) treating the aqueous dispersion containing the cellulose fibrous particle obtained in (2) by a high-pressure homogenizer at 60-414 MPa.

11. The process according to Claim 10, wherein, in the step (3), a concentration of the aqueous dispersion is 0.1-5% by weight, a pressure of the treatment is 70-250 MPa, and the treatment is repeated 6 times or less.

12. The process for producing the aqueous suspension-form composition according to Claim 10 or 11, wherein the step (1) further comprises blending a water-soluble polymer and/or a hydrophilic substance.

13. The process for producing an aqueous suspension-form composition according to Claim 12, wherein the water-soluble polymer is sodium carboxymethyl cellulose.

14. A process for producing the water-dispersible dry composition according to Claim 4 or 5, comprising at least the following steps (1)-(5):

(1) preparing an aqueous dispersion of a

cellulose fibrous particle having a length of 4 mm or less from a cellulosic substance derived from a plant cell wall which has an average degree of polymerization of 400 or higher and an α -cellulose content of 60-100% by weight, provided that the cellulosic substance having an average degree of polymerization of lower than 1,300 and an α -cellulose content exceeding 90% by weight are excepted;

(2) fiber-shortening and micronizing the cellulose fibrous particle in the aqueous dispersion of (1) so that a sedimentation volume thereof becomes 70 % by volume or more;

(3) treating the aqueous dispersion containing the cellulose fibrous particle obtained in (2) by a high-pressure homogenizer at 60-414 MPa;

(4) blending a water-soluble polymer and/or a hydrophilic substance into the aqueous dispersion treated in (3); and

(5) drying the aqueous dispersion obtained in (4).

15. The process for producing a water-dispersible dry composition according to Claim 14, wherein the water-soluble polymer is sodium carboxymethyl-cellulose.

16. A food composition, comprising:

the water-dispersible cellulose according to Claim 1 or 2, the aqueous suspension-form composition according to Claim 3, the water-dispersible dry

composition according to any one of Claims 4 - 6, or the gel-forming composition according to Claim 7.

17. A method for stabilizing a milk component-containing drink, comprising:

blending the water-dispersible cellulose according to Claim 1 or 2, the aqueous suspension-form composition according to Claim 3, or the water-dispersible dry composition according to any one of Claims 4 - 6 into the milk component-containing drink.